

Agenda Item: 6
Meeting Date: June 7, 2007

Environmental Water Account (EWA) Review Panel

Summary: In collaboration with EWA Implementing agencies and involved stakeholders, the CALFED Science Program organized an independent review of the EWA Program in November 2006, the fifth review conducted since the program's inception in 2000. Staff will provide an overview of the joint EWA Agency/Science Program response to the Review Panel.

Action: This is an action item for the ISB to evaluate and comment on the EWA Panel review and joint EWA Agency/Science Program response.

Background: The Environmental Water Account (EWA) Program has been a key component of the CALFED Program's Water Management Strategy. It was created in 2000 to address two problems - declining fish populations and unreliable water supplies. Its purpose is to protect fish by making it possible to modify water project operations to reduce entrainment at no uncompensated water cost to CVP/SWP water users. The EWA Program is also part of the CALFED policy of adaptive management; ongoing discussions and periodic scientific review are a critical part of the process to help guide management decisions. The EWA was designed as a seven year experiment. Thus, 2007 is its last official year. A reduced EWA is planned for the next few years, but its longer-term future is uncertain.

To meet these goals, the CALFED Science Program provides biannual scientific review of EWA to assess how much water was acquired, how it was used, and whether it had a beneficial effect. The 2006 Review stressed the key question of biological effectiveness. Specific elements of the review included the contribution of the EWA to protecting and restoring delta smelt, Chinook salmon, and steelhead in the San Francisco estuary and watershed. The Review Panel also reviewed the Resources Agency Action Matrix: a proposed set of actions for modified water project operations intended to improve conditions for pelagic organisms, including delta smelt.

The ISB asked that this year's response to the EWA Panel also include a history and synthesis of EWA Panel recommendations. In response to the ISB's request, this year's response to the Panel includes two parts, A) the history and synthesis, and B) the Agency/Science Program response including goals and actions for 2007-2008.

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Meeting Date: February 22, 2007
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Attachments:

Attachment 1 – The 2006 EWA Panel Review

Attachment 2 – The Joint EWA Agency/Science Program response to the EWA
Science Review Panel

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